Maiden Story

Whyte Bard

Excerpted from "The Bardic Mysteries: The Book of the Fool," by the Whyte Bard:

The Maiden, being young and giddy, was watching the Men and Women as they played and laughed in the Garden one morning. She turned to the Fool, blinked her eyes, and said, "They are so fine and good, smiling all the time. How will they ever learn and grow if they have no obstacles; if there is no pain?"

And Trickster smiled a mad smile, and gave the Maiden a box. It was a small box, of something that might have been wood, but wasn't, and it had no lock on it. It did, however, have a small, neatly lettered sign on its lid.

Trickster pointed to the sign, and said, "That's called 'writing.' I haven't invented it yet."

"Oh," said the Maiden, "But what's in the box?"

"Oh," said Trickster, "You don't want to know!"

"I don't?" said the Maiden, slightly miffed, "But I'm Deity!"

"I know that," Trickster grinned, "But you still don't want to know."

"Well...all right." And the Maiden flounced away, very much put out.

Trickster watched Her go, and grinned. He then put the box down where the Maiden could see it whenever She looked in that direction, and sauntered away, eating an apple.

The Maiden looked at the box for several days.

"I wonder what's in there..." She would think to Herself. "That Person is always up to some trick."

Finally, Her curiosity got the best of Her, and She walked into the Garden and picked up the box.

She sat down under the apple tree, and spread Her skirts about Her, and placed the box on Her lap.

She looked at it for a long time, and then thought, "Well! A little peek inside can't do any harm..." And She opened the box.

Immediately, the lid sprang off, and a cloud of tiny things flew out! They were like flies, or mosquitoes, and they buzzed crazily about Her head for a moment, and then flew off in all directions.

Trickster stepped out from behind the tree.

"Well, now You've done it," He said.

"Done what?" asked the Maiden.

"Let loose what was in the box. Pain, and Suffering, and Envy, and Hatred, and Jealousy, and War, and Covetousness, and Sloth, and quite a lot more."

Just then, the box gave a great heave, and a very tiny, very bright little Something flew out.

Trickster smiled a warm smile, and said, "...and Hope. I'm an eternal optimist. Want an apple?"

"I guess so," said the Maiden. "What did it say on the lid, anyway?"

"The usual. You know, 'Do Not Open This Box.'"

"Oh. I guess I messed up, huh?"

He smiled at Her, and said, "Not really. We would have had to do it anyway, and this makes a better story, though they might get it wrong."

They both looked at the Men and Women, who were now sitting around on the grass arguing with each other. A couple of the Men were fighting, and a group of the Women were talking in whispers about another group of Women. Another Man had fenced off a section of the Garden, while another was coughing a little with a bewildered expression on his face.

"Excuse me for a bit," said Trickster. "I guess I have to be the One to finish this, and get them started up the Path."

He walked briskly over to the Men and Women, changing His Aspect as He went, until He appeared as a different sort of Being indeed.

"Time to leave," said the Angel to the Men and Women.

"Yes, we know," they answered, only half sadly, and the Men and the Women started out from the Garden, out on the Path Of Being Human.

Trickster watched them go, out from the Gates.

"Good luck..." He murmured, and he sheathed the Flaming Sword and closed the Gates of Innocence.

Thus it was, and so it is, and evermore shall be so!

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